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UNCLAS ROME 004724

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION: ROME A POSITIVE STOPOVER FOR THE DELEGATION ROADSHOW

REF: A. ROME 4586

[1B](#). ROME 4665

[¶1.](#) THE FIVE-MEMBER OFFICIAL DELEGATION FROM IRAQ, HEADED BY AMBASSADOR MAREK BELKA, STOPPED IN ROME OCTOBER 9 FOR LESS THAN 24 HOURS. THE DELEGATION FIRST MET WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE MFA IRAQ TASK FORCE RICARDO SESSA ALONE, THEN WITH THE TASK FORCE -- WHICH INCLUDES INTERAGENCY AND PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES -- ON IRAQ'S PRESENT ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION (REF A). FINALLY, SESSA HOSTED A DINNER IN HONOR OF THE DELEGATION, WHICH PROVIDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DELEGATION TO NETWORK WITH ADDITIONAL PRIVATE SECTOR, GOI AND U.S. EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES.

[¶2.](#) THE DELEGATES ALL REPORTED BEING WELL-RECEIVED BY THEIR ITALIAN HOSTS, WHO, THE IRAQIS SAID, SHOWED GENUINE INTEREST IN IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION. THEY NOTED THAT THE ITALIANS SEEMED PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE OIL AND INFRASTRUCTURE SECTORS, BUT NEITHER SIDE GOT INTO SPECIFICS OF PROJECTED DONATIONS AT THE MADRID CONFERENCE. THE DINNER INCLUDED SOME THIRTY GUESTS, AMONG WHOM WERE REPRESENTATIVES FROM FINMECANICA (AN ITALIAN MULTINATIONAL HIGH-TECH MANUFACTURING COMPANY) AND ALITALIA. THE IRAQIS DESCRIBED THEM AS THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC PARTICIPANTS AT THE EVENT. TELECOM ITALIA IS REPORTEDLY ALSO INTERESTED IN BIDDING ON FIXED-LINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN IRAQ, WHICH HELPS EXPLAIN THE COMPANY'S INCLUSION AMONG ITALY'S POTENTIAL MADRID PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPANTS (REF B).

[¶3.](#) WHILE IT OPTED FOR A RELATIVELY LOW-KEY VISIT, THE MFA ISSUED A PRESS STATEMENT OCTOBER 9 WHICH HIGHLIGHTED THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE IRAQ TASK FORCE TO CONSIDER RECENT ECONOMIC REFORM MEASURES IN IRAQ AND TO REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITALIAN FIRMS TO PARTICIPATE IN IRAQI RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.

SEMBLER

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2003ROME04724 - Classification: UNCLASSIFIED